89: Wood M,Y-4,5 (1924-1937) - 1975
OU9 Tonga OU9

[1935 - 1964]
Chapter XIX.

TONGAN SAINTS AND LEADERS

More important than overseas ministers and teachers have been the Tongan leaders of the Free Wesleyan Church. Their influence upon the people depended, in the final analysis, upon the quality of their lives, and the term "saints" can be worthily applied to some of them. 79

Among the leaders in this century Queen Salote was undoubtedly outstanding — and not only because of her rank. Her influence was derived from her Christian integrity and her conspicuous personal talents. She seemed to inherit the commanding presence and the eloquence of Tupou I. Oratory is highly esteemed in Tonga. The Queen's clear and challenging voice, with a direct and logical approach to her topics, religious or national, always held her hearers' attention. This effect was evident both in large assemblies and in the small devotional meetings which she regularly conducted. As a poet also she was conspicuous. Her poems were set to melodies of her own composition and were used in descriptive dances at festivals. Her written and spoken English was perfect. Sir Harry Luke (High Commissioner, 1938-42) said of her dispatches, "She writes in a clear unaffected style with a simplicity of phrasing and pleasantly old-fashioned flavour faintly reminiscent of John Bunyan".[1] 643 795 643 537 643 538 535 191

Before her visit to Britain in 1953 brought her world-fame the Queen had attracted interest in places closer to Tonga. In 1935 she visited Sydney for medical treatment; upon her recovery from an operation the Church held a reception for her in Sydney Town Hall from which hundreds of expectant guests were turned away. Auckland, which she frequently visited, was regarded by her and the people of that city as her second home. 643 484

The Queen's sorrows were many. She often said that these drew her closer to God and increased her sympathies with others. The loss of her husband was a great deprivation. Before then she had lost her second son, William Tuku'aho, who died on 28 April 1938, at the age of sixteen, from the effects of a rheumatic heart. She was a mother indeed to her people, knowing them intimately and being concerned with their personal problems. In no part of the nation's life was her influence greater than in the promotion of the welfare of women. In 1933 she founded an organization for the improvement of living conditions in the villages and the encouragement of handicrafts. Miss Rowlands, Principal of Queen Salote College, her personal friend, gave her support in these enterprises. The Queen organized the first international assembly held in Tonga, the Pan-Pacific and South-East Asia Women's Association Conference, which met at Nuku'alofa in August 1964. 643 643 562

Through all the changing years the Queen bore witness to the reality of her personal faith. She was an able expositor of the Scriptures on both formal and informal occasions. Her solicitude for the well-being of the Church was revealed 643 795